

We always have a superabundant quantity of children watching or trying to help. Gros Jean and petit Pierrot (8 & 4) Marie's sons tumble into everything and have to be rescued, scolded and comforted. Then its doughnuts or something as unfamiliar I have to draw a line a foot or two away and its death to any small boy who crosses. A silent little 11 year old named Madeleine has proved herself a splendid worker and sometimes she and little Suzanne and I supply the whole needed working force.

The canteen is legally open only in the evenings except Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, but whenever I'm there I give any soldier who strolls by anything he wants. Its awkward sometimes when an intermittent procession wants lemonade while my hands are all doughy, or the grease is just right for frying.

I sometimes wonder where all the time goes- we don't do an awful lot. Fleming, our detail, does the heavy cleaning now and keeps the water bag filled; he carries and breaks up the boxes we use for firewood, and opens the cases of stuff when needed. There are constant interruptions though- soldiers, small boys, Marie's stories, etc. so somehow I'm always late to lunch. I'm afraid my lateness is more or less deliberate for its quicker to take what I can get at the end of a meal than to sit through a regular dinner. Madame, the hotel keeper, is the only cook, and slow- my word! Poor old soul; she told me the other day she was 59. I exclaimed "Oh Madame, you don't look it" and she was pleased. I meant it literally for with her black wig, her tired eyes, and the lines in her face she looks all of 69- and I guess she may be, if not more.

Yes, Antella, I will Two fried eggs, beans of various sorts, roast veal, or very tough beef, sometimes both, rye bread and no dessert, except very occasionally a little jam. That's varied by exchanging the beef for pork, the beans for potatoes or carrots, and then fried eggs for an omelette. About once every two weeks we get the back and wings and neck of a chicken, and once we had a real duck. Of course there are sausages, and uncooked sardines, and fried pigs feet, as hors d'oeuvres but I'm not French enough yet - even though I can say "Oh la la" with the best of them.

22 or 23rd August- I really don't know which.

I guess I'll have to "continue in our next" Its been too hot today to write and I shall be too busy for the next two days. I'm continually well and happy. The only thing that's interfered is another bee sting (yellow jacket I mean) that swelled my hand into a small sized sofa cushion for two days. It wasn't as bad as last time though and is practically over now- bandages off, knuckles appearing like evolutionary mountain tops from the sea, it still itches, but not much. I wish I weren't so susceptible to stings. They hardly affect Marie at all but my hands seem to respond to them as my head does to flattery and it takes a long while to reduce the swelling. It was my right hand this time which was a nuisance I caught the bee (or rather he caught me) two inches below the surface of some cake mixture I was kneading with my hands. The little brute got mixed in and chose that way of escape. Oh well- c'est la guerre! And besides people are so nice to me its almost worth it.

Isn't the war news grand. I engaged a window in Paris today for the parades after peace is declared. Not really, but who knows.

Goodbye for a few days, very dear love to you. I'm thinking of each one of you separately as I write that, but when it comes to Father there's an end on it.

Mildred.